



THE EASTERN IOWA DX'ER

WINTER 1996

CLUB NEWSLETTER OF THE EASTERN IOWA DX ASSOCIATION

1996 EIDXA Officers

President: W0SR Jim Spencer
V. Pres: W8BZRL Tom Vavra
Sec/Tres: K0GT Gary Toomsen

Repeater Committee:
K0VM Al Groff
W0MJN Joe Finkstein

Membership Committee:
W0SR Jim Spencer
W0IZ Dale Repp

EIDXA Repeater:
145.190 W0MJN

DX Cluster:
147.51 W8BZRL
144.91 223.40
CR NetRom Freqs

====> EIDXA MEETING NOTICE <====

Date: 19th of January 1996 (Friday)

Time: 7:30 pm (door open at 6:30)

Place: Room 219C
Linn Hall
Kirkwood Community College
Cedar Rapids

Agenda: Business meeting. The program will have W0EJ sharing his efforts to lightning-proof his QTH after several hits. The usual pizza/socializing too.

=====> Dues are DUE <=====

Plan on attending!!

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The winter months provide lots of time to tune the low bands and listen to the static. While waiting to find that rare one, we can put our minds to work thinking about the projects we would like to complete when the warmer weather returns. The spring also brings our traditional thunderstorm season. While it might be too late to have a good grounding system in place for this spring and summer, it is not too late to start the planning needed to have one ready for the next year. Wade has way too much personal experience with this subject and is going to share it with us at our January meeting. Plan on attending to get some clues on what can be done to beef up your grounding system. Bring your questions too, and if Wade doesn't have the answer, perhaps someone else can shed a bit of light for you.

20 October 1995

The fall meeting of the EIDX was held at 7:30 pm in Linn Hall on the Kirkwood Campus.

Minutes and Treas. report were approved as printed in the newsletter.

W0EJ reported that tower registrations for 13 broadcast, no cellular and 54 amateur towers have been received in Linn County by the Sept. 15 deadline. There was 1 question about the wording of the ordinance regarding a tower of 80 ft. Setback requirements may be addressed again later. A number of other government agencies are requesting copies of the ordinance to study as guide for their local ordinances. Wade also expressed his appreciation for the gift certificate given to him by the three local ham clubs in gratitude for his efforts during the drafting of the tower ordinance.

K0AL favored us with a humorous story of the DXERS and the S.O.B.s.

K0VM reports no complaints with the repeater.

W8BZRL reports that the new cluster software will not be ready for the CQWW phone weekend. Everyone was reminded to limit message traffic during the contest.

W0SR gave a rundown on the politics of the DX advisory committee and the ongoing saga of Scarborough Reef. Other business for the DXAC is Pratts Is., Mt Athos, S. Sudan, N. Korea and XY0RR operation.

N0JL, Iowa SM, pointed out that our club is better represented at ARRL than any other in the Midwest Div. by W0SR and K0AL. Our SM says he has been busy filling appointments, handling traffic and visiting as many meetings and hamfests as possible. He reports that the vanity call is waiting FCC form 610V availability. He asks for newsletters and news items to be sent to him for inclusion in the section news in QST.

A unique award was made to NR0X by Pres. W0SR for the dreams of the most feet of tower.

Election of officers due to nominations being closed as each of the present officers agreed to be nominated again resulted in no changes for 1996.

Meeting was adjourned and a video of the construction of the W3LPL contest station shown.

Respectively, Gary J. Toomsen K0GT

Found on the PacketCluster

Hello and tnx for reading this... I recently purchased a 500hz CW filter for my Icom 735. I carefully followed the instructions and installed it. The problem is that with the CW filter OFF, the tones are the same, BUT when I turn the filter ON, I still can hear CW!!! Actually the cw sounds clearer! Did I install it backwards? Or maybe the filter is defective? Any help would be great!

Best 73 es GLDX de <name deleted>

Tired of Iced Antennas?
Pete N4ZR

Here's a piece of potentially useful info for protection against ice on antennas that last appeared on the reflector close to 2 years ago. Data courtesy of W9LT, who notes that address/phone number and prices below changed earlier this year.

A firm called Vellox makes a "hydrophobic" paint, which when properly applied to antennas (or anything, really) makes them shed water and water ice. The stuff was designed for Arctic radomes and similar surfaces, but I understand it works just fine on antennas, towers, etc. It really involves a primer and a top coat, both of which are a little tricky to apply and pretty expensive.

The firm is Vellox
PO Box 7329
Lake Worth, FL 33466
Tel: 407/967-3011
Fax: 967-5036

Prices as of April 1, 1995, were:

S-76 primer \$92/gal (covers 300-400 sq. ft.)
S-76 topcoat \$92/gal (covers 90-100 sq. ft.)

The top coat is designed to be sprayed or brushed, and apparently takes several coats to form a good water-shedding finish, hence the lower coverage spec. I can't confidently relate the square-footage to typical ham antennas, except to observe that a gallon of top coat will obviously do several of them. They have offered in the past various "consumer kits," costing in the \$55-\$100 area, involving cans of primer and spray cans of top coat, but that doesn't seem too attractive given the high waste inherent in spraying round elements.

Here's a really small tip on how I keep my paddle put.

Take a standard mouse pad and punch or drill holes in the pad to correspond with the three feet of your [Bencher, Brown Brothers, Vibroplex, etc.] paddle. The paddle feet are now touching the table top, so the height of the plastic your fingers touch is correct. Yet there is a giant surface area of rubber designed not to slide holding the paddle in place.

A perfect use for those mouse pads you get free at computer conventions, or for only \$1 or \$2 at computer shows.

Fred Hopengarten K1VR

I have just discovered a source of azimuthal-equidistant maps that may be of interest to contesters. The Geography and Mapping Division of the U.S. Library of Congress (+1 202-707-6277) has a series of 3' x 3' (roughly 90 cm square) maps of this type published in the early 1960s by the U.S. Navy, centered on various locations in the United States and abroad. The library can make a full-size black and white copy for walk-in customers for \$6, "while you wait." Mail-in customers may require shipping/handling charges. Should you want to call in and determine whether there's a map there to meet your needs, or to find out about shipping, mention call number G.3202.B72, which is the common call number for all of the maps in this series.

73, Pete N4ZR

K5ZD 160m Antenna

I got several requests for details on my 160m antenna set-up. It's nothing too exotic, and for that reason may be of interest to many of you.

I use a full size 1/4-wave ground plane with 4 elevated radials. Feed point is about 15' off the ground.

Wow! That's pretty big... Yes, but it is all done off of a 100' tower (this is all K1KI's idea). Here's how.

The vertical runs down from the top of my 100 ft tower. The feed point is about 100' away from the tower (so it is about a 45 degree slope). I get some help from the fact that the ground slopes down away from the tower about 20' (making the tower appear to be 120' high).

The antenna is to the NNE away from the tower. As well as it does to Eu, and only fair in other directions, the tower must be providing some reflector effect.

Per K3LR's suggestion, I feed this through a bead balun to make sure no RF flowing back down the feedline. I also have a 1/4-wave shorted piece of coax T-connected at the feed point (basic 160m band pass filter). This reduced the amount of power coming back down my 80m coax when transmitting on 160m from about 8W to 0.5W. Tim also suggested this as a way to prevent the 160m antenna from interacting with the 80. [80m ant is an Inv Vee off the 100' tower.]

When building the antenna, I cut 5 wires 135' long. Once it was up, I just trimmed the vertical element to make it resonant. The resonant frequency did move a little when I pulled the radials from just laying on the ground to their final height of about 10'. So pull the radials out a bit before you start trimming. I have never adjusted the length of the radials.

My location is extremely quiet. I do most of my listening on the vertical. The Beverage really only helps when there are storms to the SW.

Randy Thompson, K5ZD

THE ADVENTURES OF TIMMY THE TWERP by DON, VE3HGN

Hi, my name is Tim, (my friends call me Timmy) and I'm getting a reputation around our club as being quite a DXer. It's hard to believe, since I live in a swishy upscale neighborhood and have only a hundred watts and a vertical on my condo roof. "Gimme a break", you say. Now, just hold on, and let me tell you how I applied my DX skills to Big Game hunting. During the fall hunting season this year some of the boys from the steel mill got together for a couple of days of hunting and hard drinking up at the lodge in northern Canada. I'm not sure why they asked me to go along, but I go anyway, as I actually find it quite thrilling.

We all pile into Snooky's big station wagon on Friday night and head north. I must say, the guys really look great: they all wear these army type outfits with big boots and big belts. They all have high-powered rifles and lots of bullets, some of the guys even wear Colt 45's on their hip. I feel a little out of place in my neatly pressed tennis shorts, matching

shirt and new pair of Adidas sneakers. The guys all want to look at my weapon which I keep in a little soft leather pouch slung over my shoulder. It's a .22 calibre, nickel plated Iver Johnson revolver, with a black ivory handle. Mommy gave it to me for my protection when I was fourteen and had to walk three blocks to my violin lessons.

Early Saturday morning, and without much sleep, we all headed out looking for something to kill. The guys were wearing their camouflaged outfits, belts full of shiny cartridges and very big, long-barrelled rifles equipped with scopes. About an hour into the woods and they all started shooting. Jim, was down on one knee squinting into his 8-power scope on his thirty-aught-six and letting off a few rounds. I couldn't see what they were shooting at but I didn't want to feel out of it so I fired off a few shots. Unfortunately, I hit one of the guys in the back of the head. The guys were very understanding and assured me that it sometimes happens in a pile-up that someone messes up.

Sitting around the campfire that night, drinking beer and spinning yarns, we were joined by one of the gals from the near-by lead mine: Eva, was a really big broad who wore a .44 magnum on one hip and a flask of Brazilian Rye on the other. Eva usually hung around helping the guys locate the prey. She really fit in because when she forgot to shave her moustache for a couple of days she just looked like one of the boys.

In the evenings, as I didn't have any stories to tell, at least not the kind they would want to hear, I would retreat to a corner and curl up with Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poetry, to read and nibble on sun flower seeds. Later that night, when everyone was a bit smashed, I told them that I thought it was unfair that I never got to bag any of the big game, so I suggested that they do what we do in Ham radio; i.e., set up a list operation, so that everyone gets a fair shot ... no fuss, no muss. They promised to do what they could. The next morning at daybreak, with the boys off and hunting, I was able to sleep in. Later that afternoon, after I had finished washing my hair, doing my nails and rinsing out my shorts, I heard the boys calling me to come on out and to bring my gun.

Jim, Snooky, Don and Eva, had captured a big moose and had it all tied up tight and lying on its side. "Okay Timmy," they yelled, "load-up and start shoot'n." Well, I got as close to the big beast as I dared, and fired off a couple of rounds behind it's ear. The guys were yelling, "It's still kicking, give Timmy a chance you guys." This time I screwed up my courage and stuck the barrel of my little revolver into the animals mouth and cranked off a few more rounds. Jim, yelled, "Give'm one in the eyeball Timmy, I think I saw his tail move." Finally, it was over and the gang all yelled, "Good Shooting, good shooting."

I must say, I was flushed with pride, the same feeling I get when I work a New Country on a List, and they all yell, "Good contact, good contact".

I joined the boys around the campfire that night, even had a can of beer. I told them that there was something very democratic about hunting that way as it means everybody gets a chance, not just the big boys. Right?

"Ya'got that right," said Don, "we're just here to help."

The foregoing is a fictional account of a day in the life of Timmy The Werp, a modern DX List Patron. Any resemblance to HF DXers, living or dead is pure coincidence.

Packet Cluster Corner
WB8ZRL

I am constantly amazed when I point out PacketCluster features that most users are not aware of. Many of these features are those identified in the user's documentation. Others are local additions that have been noted in this column. None are hidden, and all can be found by a little snooping. Maybe those of us that like to poke around to see what we can find are in the minority.

One of the most active features of the cluster supports the chase for QSLs. QSL managers can be found with the GQlist (SHOW/QSL). Addresses can be found several places. SHOW/HAM gets information from G3WJN's database. Countries supported by this database can be found by TYPE/FILE HAMCALL. WA0RJT's BBS also has a database which is searchable from the cluster. HELP/QSL for batch information. TYPE/FILE REQQTH for the countries supported there. For real-time support from WA0RJT, log on direct (through the WB8ZRL-2 switch to stay connected to the cluster) and then BUC <callsign> to lookup.

When you are tuning the bands and hear contest exchanges, but are not sure of what the contest is, SHOW/CONTEST <3-letter month abbreviation> will give you a list of the DX contests during that month. The zero-district QSO party probably will not be in this database. I try to keep this one current by downloading updates from the WWW each month.

I have always had trouble knowing what zones the UA0 and UA9s were in. There is a ZONE database that accepts parameters of either zone numbers or common prefixes. SH/ZONE 18 will give the suffix first letters of the UA0s and UA9s in zone 18. SH/ZONE UA0 will likewise show what calls are in zones 18, 19, and 23. Use only the common prefixes.

There is an old copy of the DEALER database. This is an excellent source for addresses and phone numbers of ham radio manufacturers and dealers. SHOW/DEAL will get you started. Current updates require a yearly subscription, and the database has never been used, so I could not justify the cost. If enough need develops, I will rethink this position.

The PREFIX database is fairly current. When the strange prefixes show up on the bands, SHOW/PREF <pref> will usually help identify the strange call. Keep the <pref> as short as possible to uniquely identify the country. XQS will not identify, but XQ0 and XQ will. It is not clear how you specify prefixes such as VP2 and VP8. The primary designation is VP2E, VP2M, and VP2V versus VP8/F, VP8/G, VP8/0, VP8/SA, and VP8/SH. When to use the / is not well defined. Again, just keep it as short as you can.

The cluster can help you identify optimum times to listen on the lower bands. By identifying the sunrise/sunset time at the DX location, you can narrow down the best times to hear them. SH/SUN <pref> to get the times. SH/SUN to list your own sunrise/sunset (or mine if you never SET/LOC).

Not all of the databases are on each node. If they are not on your node, they can usually be accessed remotely. Ask your SYSOP about setting it up. And while you are at it, thank him for taking the time to do it.

cu on the cluster. de ZRL

QSLing tricks

Here's a trick told to me by Ed, NT2X, for mailing QSLs to Russia:
Write on the envelope: UEHHOCTEW HET
It's is Russian for "nothing of value."
Apparently, a lot of the thieves are gullible enough to believe it.
Every time I've tried it, I've gotten a reply! 73 W2UP

A couple little tricks I read about a while ago on PacketCluster and have been using: Put a piece of carbon paper inside your larger envelope so it can't be "candled". And have the Post Office put a metered sticker on the envelope rather than stamps.

I've been using this to South American and CIS stations for about 5 or 6 months now with dramatically increased percentages of returns from these places.

I hope this helps! 73, Zack W9SZ

I've found that a US \$2.00 bill really WORKS ... few overseas have ever seen one. They're all I use for DX cards. 73! de Ken Kopp/KØPP

Extracted from the The ARRL Letter Vol. 14, No. 22:

A new fee schedule for ARRL operating awards will take effect January 1, 1996. Some fees are unchanged, some rise from 1995 levels, and some are new (in many cases in the past the League recouped the cost of postage for mailing of an award and return of QSL cards, but absorbed the costs of printing the certificates and of administration).

The new schedule is based on policy developed by the Board's Membership Services Committee and approved by the Board's Administration and Finance Committee, with the goal of approximately breaking even on the costs of offering awards. Here are the new fees, with previous fees, if any, in parentheses:

VUCC and DXCC certificates

First ever: \$10 (includes pin); Additional: \$5 (includes pin);
Replacement: \$5; Pins: \$5. (VUCC certificate fees are new.)

DXCC applications

First for an ARRL member in a calendar year: No charge for the first 120 QSO credits (previously, no limit). Additional for an ARRL member in a calendar year: \$10 for the first 100 QSO credits (new).

First for a foreign non-ARRL member: \$10 for first 120 QSO credits (previously, no limit). Additional for a foreign non-ARRL member: \$20 for first 100 QSO credits (new).

Additional QSOs: 10 cents per QSO (new); Convention/HQ walk-in card check: \$2 (limit of 120 cards per application). (Return postage must be provided by the applicant for any cards submitted or for information requests.)

Gumming up the works

After dealing me from the bottom of the deck Friday night before CQP (Cal QSO Party ed), Murphy played his all time best prank on me Saturday morning just before the contest started. Even though he kept me up late the night before, I was up fairly early, and decided to ride my exercise bike to work off the nervous energy. I pulled on my regular workout shorts and tee shirt and hit the bike for 35 minutes. After I cooled down, I had breakfast. Time for a quick shower and then to the shack.

As I pulled off my exercise shorts, I realized something was amiss. Or should I say something was sticky, very sticky. Somehow, and I have not figured out how, a large, a very large, wad of gum was in the seat of my pants. And after riding the bike, hard, for 35 minutes, that large wad of gum was gooey, very gooey, and most of it was no longer stuck in the shorts. It was worked well into, well, into where I would be sitting for most of the next two days. I've never been tarred and feathered, but I always thought removing the tar would not be fun. Removing gum from such a sensitive area was not fun, not fun at all. My wife tells me bikini waxes are not fun. Now I can empathize completely. More on Murphy's earlier dealings and CQP later.

Anon

Thanks to the following for items used in this newsletter:

K0GT, N0YVY, N4ZR, K1VR, K5ZD, VE3HGN, W2UP, W9SZ, K0PP and W3LPL

CONTESTER's coax cable attenuation charts

By: Frank Donovan W3LPL

I developed and have been using the following charts for some years. The CONTESTERS I've given copies to have found them most useful as well. The first table is the common attenuation per 100 ft chart, but with specific values for each ham band.

The second table is in cable feet per dB, which can be very handy for tradeoff analysis (e.g. do I really need to use Andrew LDF5 for my 1000 foot run to my Beverages or is RG-8X good enuf?).

The third table shows the results of just such a tradeoff analysis, each entry in the table represents the cable length in feet before Andrew LDF5 offers a 1 dB advantage vs the various cables listed

The last table is identical to the third table, except these trades are for Andrew LDF4.

CABLE ATTENUATION (dB per 100 ft)

	1.8	3.5	7.0	14.0	21.0	28.0	50.0	144	440	1296
LDF7-50A	.03	.04	.06	.08	.10	.12	.16	.27	0.5	0.9
FHJ-7	.03	.05	.07	.10	.12	.15	.20	.37	0.8	1.7
LDF5-50A	.04	.06	.09	.14	.17	.19	.26	.45	0.8	1.5
FXA78-50J	.06	.08	.13	.17	.23	.27	.39	.77	1.4	2.8
3/4" CATV	.06	.08	.13	.17	.23	.26	.38	.62	1.7	3.0
LDF4-50A	.09	.13	.17	.25	.31	.36	.48	.84	1.4	2.5
RG-17	.10	.13	.18	.27	.34	.40	.50	1.3	2.5	5.0
SLA12-50J	.11	.15	.20	.28	.35	.42	.56	1.0	1.9	3.0
FXA12-50J	.12	.16	.22	.33	.40	.47	.65	1.2	2.1	4.0
FXA38-50J	.16	.23	.31	.45	.53	.64	.85	1.5	2.7	4.9
9913	.16	.23	.31	.45	.53	.64	.92	1.6	2.7	5.0
RG-213	.25	.37	.55	.75	1.0	1.2	1.6	2.8	5.1	10.0
RG-8X	.49	.68	1.0	1.4	1.7	1.9	2.5	4.5	8.4	

CABLE ATTENUATION (Ft per dB)

	1.8	3.5	7.0	14.0	21.0	28.0	50.0	144	440	1296
LDF7-50A	3333	2500	1666	1250	1000	833	625	370	200	110
FHJ-7	2775	2080	1390	1040	833	667	520	310	165	92
LDF5-50A	2500	1666	1111	714	588	526	385	222	125	67
FXA78-50J	1666	1250	769	588	435	370	256	130	71	36
3/4" CATV	1666	1250	769	588	435	385	275	161	59	33
LDF4-50A	1111	769	588	400	323	266	208	119	71	40
RG-17	1000	769	556	370	294	250	200	77	40	20
SLA12-50J	909	667	500	355	285	235	175	100	53	34
FXA12-50J	834	625	455	300	250	210	150	83	48	25
FXA38-50J	625	435	320	220	190	155	115	67	37	20
9913	625	435	320	220	190	155	110	62	37	20
RG-213	400	270	180	130	100	83	62	36	20	10
RG-8X	204	147	100	71	59	53	40	22	12	

FEET REQUIRED FOR 1 DB ADVANTAGE LDF5-50A VS:

	1.8	3.5	7.0	14.0	21.0	28.0	50.0	144	440	1296
LDF4-50A	2000	1430	1250	910	715	625	435	250	165	100
RG-17	1666	1430	1110	770	560	475	420	120	60	30
FXA12-50J	1250	1000	770	525	435	355	255	120	75	40
9913	835	590	455	320	280	220	150	85	53	29

FEET REQUIRED FOR 1 DB ADVANTAGE LDF4-50A VS:

	1.8	3.5	7.0	14.0	21.0	28.0	50.0	144	440	1296
RG-17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	220	90	40
FXA12-50J	-	-	2000	1250	1100	835	625	250	145	65
9913	1430	1000	715	500	455	345	235	135	75	40
RG-213	910	600	285	200	150	120	85	45	20	12

Contest Calendar

DX Contest Calendar for JANUARY:

12-14	2200-2200	JAPAN	Japan International DX Contest, CW
21	0000-2400	HA	HA DX Contest, CW
26-28	2200-1600	CQ160	CQ World Wide 160 Meter Contest, CW
27-28	0600-1800	REF	REF French Contest, CW
27-28	1300-1300	UBA	Union of Belgium Amateurs Contest, SSB

DX Contest Calendar for FEBRUARY:

10-11	0000-2400	WPXRTTY	WPX RTTY Contest
17-18	0000-0000	ARRLDX	ARRL International DX Contest, CW
24-25	0600-1800	REF	REF French Contest, SSB
24-25	1300-1300	UBA	Union of Belgium Amateurs Contest, CW
23-25	2200-1600	CQ160	CQ World Wide 160-Meter Contest, SSB

DX Contest Calendar for MARCH:

2-3	0000-2400	ARRLDX	ARRL International DX Contest, SSB
18-19*	0200-0200	BARTG	BARTG Spring RTTY Contest
18-19*	1200-1200	RUSSIA	Russian DX Contest, CW/SSB
16-17	0001-2400	BERMUDA	The Bermuda Contest, CW/SSB
30-31	0000-2400	CQWPX	CQ World Wide Prefix Contest, SSB

* 1995 date 1996 date not verified

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